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ABSTRACT

Speech communication theorists have defined certain rhetorical characteristics that may improve the use and production of written texts. In order to determine whether social studies textbooks have rhetorical characteristics--containing both content information and the author's attitudes toward it--and whether these characteristics have the desired positive effects on students, two studies were conducted. A typology of metadiscourse was used to describe the types and amounts of informational and attitudinal discourse in nine social studies texts for students from third grade to college level and nine texts written by social scientists for adults, ranging from nonacademic to academic periodicals and monographs. Findings showed consistent differences in the use of informational and attitudinal metadiscourse, with nontextbooks using more attitudinal metadiscourse and appearing more lively than textbooks. In the second study, with 120 sixth graders, a chapter from a social studies textbook was modified by adding informational and attitudinal metadiscourse and interpersonal voice as variables to determine their effects on retention and attitude. No overall significant main effects were found, although results indicated that metadiscourse was helpful for some subgroups of students, depending on whether interpersonal voice was used. (Tables and diagrams are included.) (DF)

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THE EFFECT OF A RHETORICAL TEXTBOOK ON STUDENTS: TWO STUDIES OF METADISCOURSE AND INTERPERSONAL VOICE

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ABSTRACT

Metadiscourse was explored (an author's presence in text) and its benefits for improving social studies textbooks and children's learning and attitudes. Metadiscourse involves aspects of text that affect author/reader relationships, the interpersonal function of language. A rhetorical textbook, one that including both interpersonal and ideational aspects, focuses on the communicative act of writing/reading. Viewpoints from rhetoric and literary/film theory, sociolinguistics, and education have been employed in this study. The study consists of several components and research methods. A historical review of different perspectives in revealed shifts in perceptions of proper author roles and disclosed converging views of a more primary role for authors and acceptance of interpersonal voice and author commentary as legitimate rhetorical devices.

Several classification systems were used to develop a typology of metadiscourse with two broad categories, informational and attitudinal. Using this typology, a descriptive study of metadiscourse use in social studies textbooks and nontextbooks found consistent differences in the way informational and attitudinal metadiscourse were used; nontextbooks used more attitudinal metadiscourse and appeared more lively than textbooks.

In an experimental study with sixth graders, a chapter from a typical social studies textbook was modified by adding informational and attitudinal metadiscourse and interpersonal voice as variables in order to investigate their effects on retention and attitude. No overall significant main effects were found, but differential significant effects were found for subtests and subgroups. The voice variable and high vs. low comfort subgroups were critical factors. Explanations are given for the lack of certain expected effects, and the issues concerning metadiscourse use are discussed.

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I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Language arts and content area educators and parents have many goals for children in school, some of which include: 1) learning how to learn, 2) learning content area reading and writing strategies, 3) learning the content, and 4) developing positive attitudes both toward learning and toward the content learned. But many children have trouble in all these areas. Apparently, the transition from basal readers to social studies and science textbooks is particularly difficult, as documented in several sources. Evidence comes from classroom observation, teacher-student interviews, and parent surveys (Crismore, 1981), from large scale assessment tests of progress in social studies, reading comprehension, and writing (NAEP, 1978) and from empirical studies (Dixon, 1978), that social studies textbooks are difficult to understand and remember, and anxiety-producing for many children.

One of the reasons that children find reading and writing social studies texts so difficult may be that textbooks do not foster the skills needed for learning (Crismore, 1982). Because of the unfamiliarity of topics and text conventions and because the amount and complexity of social studies reading and writing steadily increases throughout the grades, it is important that children acquire the skills they need to understand and remember the information presented in their textbooks and to produce their own informative texts. To do this, they need textbooks with text characteristics that foster these skills.

Specialists in social studies as well as parents and educators consider it important for children to develop positive attitudes toward social studies and the reading and writing of social studies texts (Daly, in press: Mikulecky, 1977; Tierney & Crismore, 1983). Yet many students find social

studies textbooks dull and uninteresting and therefore do little or no social studies reading beyond the required textbook assignements (Fitzgerald, 1979) and do almost no social studies writing. In order to develop positive attitudes toward social studies, including a desire to read and write about it, students need textbooks that they find interesting and engaging.

If authors, publishers, and educators intend that textbooks not only survive but also increase in use and effectiveness, then some fundamental changes may need to take place concerning the notion of what a content-area textbook should be. It may be that the present social studies textbooks, because of certain text characteristics are uninteresting to students not only causing them to read less but also making it less likely that they will understand the significance of what the authors/editors are saying or perceive the textbook as a model for their own content writing. In addition, it may be that some children approach social studies reading and writing with a great deal of anxiety for various reasons. Perhaps these anxious children need a textbook quite different from their present one in order to reach their potential in that content area.

Although social studies textbooks are emphasized in this investigation, they are only examples. What is said about social studies textbooks, applies to most other textbooks and computer software as well.

II. RHETORICAL TEXTBOOKS AS A SOLUTION

Speech communication theorists (Bradley, 1981; Ehninger, Monroe & Gronbeck, 1978) have defined certain rhetorical characteristics of effective spoken texts that may advance the goals of learning from written texts and producing written texts. There are a number of effective rhetorical text characteristics that may advance the goals including point of view, unity,

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coherence, structure, development, emphasis, tone, learner appropriateness, an author/learner relationship, and author credibility and personality. Speech communicative theorists suggest that communication can be enhanced by having a rather elaborate preview and/or introduction to the material to be read, together with an explicitly stated purpose/goal. They would also include a discourse topic, controlling idea or thesis for the discourse topic, a rationale or justification for the controlling ideas and purposes (in other words, a complete communication plan for the text), a body and conclusion. Because young children's learning may be limited by their memory and lack of prior knowledge about academic oral and written texts, these characteristics are considered particularly critical for them. These theorists also suggest that messages are better understood and more effective when the communicator takes a stance and gives directions to the audience for understanding this point of view.

The question to be considered, then, is whether presently available social studies textbooks have rhetorical characteristics, and if they do not, whether that may be one reason for their failure to have the positive effects on students that we would like them to have. A textbook which does show these characteristics will be referred to as a rhetorical textbook. A rhetorical textbook would be one that communicates both the desired content information and the author's attitudes toward it. It reflects a concern not only for the message but also for how it is presented, the message source (the author), and the message receivers/reactors (the readers). Extrapolating from speech communication research, it was hypothesized that a rhetorical social studies text would result in more effective communication of ideas, the development of more positive attitudes, and a model that children could use when they write about social studies for teachers or peers. It is

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imperative that textbook style be investigated as a factor in the development of reading and writing abilities, anxieties and attitudes. The investigation would best be carried out in two stages: A descriptive study of rhetorical characteristics social studies textbooks and an experimental study of a rhetorical social studies textbook.

Metadiscourse As A Rhetorical Device

Metadiscourse can be defined as the rhetorical act of discoursing about the spoken or written discourse. This rhetorical act results in a level of discourse that adds nothing to the propositional content. Although some authors write only primary level discourse (discourse with only propositional content), many others write discourse with a metadiscourse level added to the primary level. Metadiscourse calls attention to the communicative speech act itself and signals the presence of the author (Williams, 1981).

Metadiscourse then is what literary critics refer to as authorial intrusion. We see it used in the "dear reader" statements for adults in Henry Fielding's Joseph Andrews, published in 1742 as one of the earliest novels, and in contemporary novels such as The French Lieutenant's Woman by John Fowles, and for children in Miss Mulock's The Little Lame Prince. In nonfiction we see it in The Federalist Papers, The Declaration of Independence, Oscar Handlin's Pulitzer Prize-winning history monograph, The Uprooted, and V.M. Hillyer's history and geography textbooks written for children. Table 1 presents examples of metadiscourse.

Insert Table 1

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EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES OF METADISCOURSE AND SIGNALING

Although a few discourse analysts have studied metadiscourse as it is used in spoken and written discourse (Lautamatti, 1978; Ragan & Hopper, 1981; Schiffrin, 1980), only one researcher, Vande Kopple (1980), has experimentally manipulated metadiscourse as such. In addition to Vande Kopple's study, several studies by Meyer and her associates have investigated the extent to which signaling (metadiscourse which would be classified as text connectives and illocutionary markers by Lautamatti and Vande Kopple in their system) has an effect on readers' recall of propositional content and the effects of signaling on cognitive capacity during reading.

The experimental studies which were reviewed did not show many general effects of metadiscourse or signaling on readers' long-term recall of propositional content. Perhaps this was because they explored only a few of the possible kinds of metadiscourse. The studies investigated the effects of metadiscourse/signaling on high school students and adults, but did not investigate effects of metadiscourse/signaling on readers in elementary school.

In short, these studies point up the need to learn more about metadiscourse in order to be more precise in defining it, classifying its types, and manipulating it in appropriate amounts and locations based on the rhetorical situation and reader characteristics. It is clear that much remains to be learned about the complex concept of metadiscourse and the materials and measures needed to explore it further.

The next section presents the results of two empirical studies. The first study investigates the extent to which metadiscourse and authorial voice is found in conventional social studies textbooks and in unconventional social studies texts. The second study is an experimental study which

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investigates the effects of three aspects of metadiscourse on readers' retention of information and their emotional reactions to the manipulated text.

The final section discusses what was learned in the process of studying metadiscourse and voice and suggests educational implications and future directions for research in this area.

STUDY 1: A STUDY OF METADISCOURSE USE IN SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTS

The purpose of this study was to describe the types and amounts of each type of informational and attitudinal metadiscourse in connected discourse based on a systematic analysis of nine social science texts written for students ranging in level from third grade to college undergraduate and nine social science texts written by historians, political scientists, anthropologists and other social scientists for intelligent adults, ranging from non-academic periodicals and monographs to academic journals and books. The use of informational and attitudinal subtypes of metadiscourse by social studies writers was studied. It attempts to answer four questions: 1) Are there differences in the amount and types of metadiscourse used by social studies writers in materials used for school and non-school purposes? 2) Are there differences in the amount and types of metadiscourse used in social science textbooks across grade levels? 3) Are there differences among publishers of social science testbooks on the same grade level? Or for the same publisher on different grade levels? 4) Are there differences in the amount and types of metadiscourse used by nontextbook social science writers who write for different audiences?

The partial typology devised earlier was used to explore metadiscourse use in social studies texts written for young students and written for adult populations. Metadiscourse was classified as either informational metadis-

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course (metadiscourse which dealt with the propositional content or the text itself) or attitudinal metadiscourse (metadiscourse which dealt with author's attitudes toward the content or readers).

The chunks of text analyzed range in length from 1,000 words in the third grade text to 12,000 words in the high school and college textbooks and nontextbook samples. The unit of analysis was a whole discourse chunk such as a unit, chapter, or article. Because the length of units or chapters increases through the grades for textbooks, and because initial chapters might differ in length from middle or final chapters, the selection of units or chapters varied in number and location. Each unit, chapter or article was examined and analyzed for instances of the four subtypes of attitudinal metadiscourse (salience, emphatics, hedges, and evaluatives). In order to compare textbook instances and nontextbook instances, it was necessary to use 1,000 word unit as a base, since the text units were not the same length.

While quantitative information is necessary for indicating the existence of and relative emphasis given to different metadiscourse types in the samples, purely quantitative analysis cannot, however, convey the flavor of the text materials. This can only be done qualitatively. The categories chosen for quantitative analysis need qualitative illustration by direct quotation in order to see presentation style and patterns of use. In order to assess the degree of author presence in the text, the point of view or "person" used for the metadiscourse was also examined.

FINDINGS FOR INFORMATIONAL METADISCOURSE

The analysis indicated that both textbooks and nontextbooks showed at least some use of all four subtypes of metadiscourse. However, there were qualitative differences in the types of informational metadiscourse used in materials for school and non-school purposes. Typical textbooks used third

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person formulaic expressions and concentrated on subject matter for previews and reviews.

There were also differences in style and content between typical and atypical publishers in metadiscourse statements. The typical publishers focused on the reader and topics only in a standardized format. The publishers, however, felt free to focus on the author, focused on structure as well as subject matter, and used more variety in expressing the metadiscourse. There were quite large differences in informational metadiscourse used in texts written for general and specialized audiences. Those written for the specialized audience (readers interested in social science or social scientists) contained much more informational metadiscourse of all four types. Very little informational metadiscourse was used for general audiences. Informational metadiscourse seems characteristic of academic nontextbook writing based on this small sample.

FINDINGS FOR ATTITUDINAL METADISCOURSE

There were larger differences among books in the use of attitudinal metadiscourse than in informational metadiscourse as can be seen in Table 2. Nontextbooks used attitudinal types over five times as often as did the textbooks. It is interesting that the frequency of using different types of attitudinal metadiscourse varied in the same way for both nontextbook and textbook writers: emphatics -- hedges -- salience -- evaluatives. With the exception of four hedges and one emphatic, no attitudinal metadiscourse was used in textbooks for grades 3-6. The little attitudinal metadiscourse there was seemed to be used mostly in the textbooks for grades 7-8.

Insert Table 2

It also appeared that there were qualitative differences in the way attitudinal metadiscourse types are used in textbooks and nontextbooks. Textbooks seem to use them to refer to concrete people or happenings in the primary discourse, while nontextbooks used it to refer to abstract concepts as well as concrete phenomena. A second difference was the tendency of nontextbook writers to be present in text in the first person for expressing attitudinal metadiscourse, while the textbooks preferred more distance and used second or third person. A third difference was the large amount of emphatics and hedges used by nontextbook writers (individually and in pairs) to argue their points. Finally, textbook writers used simple evaluatives only (and very few of them), but nontextbook writers use both simple and complex evaluatives.

In general, there seemed to be a trend toward increased use of attitudinal metadiscourse in textbooks from grades 7-8 to college. Also, evaluatives, a subtype of attitudinal metadiscourse, were used differently on the college level than on other levels.

The data here suggest that audience does make a difference. More attitudinal metadiscourse of each type was used for the specialized audience than for the general audience, but the frequency of use was similar for all except for saliency. The nontextbook materials for specialized audiences contained more than three times as many salience statements as did the materials for the general audience.

The findings for the surface, stylistic variable metadiscourse have implications for publishers and consumers of social studies textbooks. The use or non-use of metadiscourse may be an indicator of deeper underlying social pedagogical beliefs and values concerning epistemology and the roles of the teacher, author, student and textbook.

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The study was limited by the lack of precision that exists in the definition of metadiscourse and the fuzziness of the boundaries between the different subtypes. Another problem is that metadiscourse, like primary discourse, can serve several functions simultaneously in a social situation. Still, clear differences in frequency and type of use were observed and documented, which indicate the characteristics of normal textbook writing in this area, and a ground work was laid for further studies of this type.

STUDY 2: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF METADISCOURSE

An exploratory experimental study was carried out in an attempt to learn more about the importance of the roles of the author, metadiscourse, point of view, author/reader relationships, and style for social studies reading and writing. It was found that studies of signaling and the one study of metadiscourse used adults or high school students as subjects and used short passages adapted from periodicals. No one has yet examined the effects of metadiscourse in content area textbooks on children's learning. The general goal of this study was to investigate the effects of metadiscourse on students. A more specific goal was to investigate the effects of metadiscourse when it was presented with a combination of first and second person voice (interpersonal) vs. third person voice (impersonal) -- 1) on children's retention of information from longer social studies passages, 2) on children's use of metadiscourse and voice in their own social studies writing, 3) on their attitudes toward the social studies passages and subject matter, and 4) on the interactions of the metadiscourse and voice variables and their level of comfort with social studies reading and writing.

Metadiscourse was classified into two general categories, informational and attitudinal, with subtypes for each. One of the assumptions of studies

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of language use and social interaction is that language functions to transmit referential information, as well as to create and sustain expressive meanings. The assumption in this study was that not only primary discourse but also metadiscourse is used for both referential and expressive ends. Metadiscourse functions on a referential, informational plane when it serves to direct readers in how to understand the primary message by referring to its content and structure, and to the author's purposes or goals. This referring can be on a global or local level. Metadiscourse functions on an expressive, attitudinal and symbolic plane when it serves to direct readers in how to take the author, that is, how to understand the author's perspective or stance toward the content or structure of the primary discourse.

The study investigated whether the inclusion of either of these two forms of metadiscourse, or the use of interpersonal style affects: 1) retention of information from social studies passages, 2) students' attitudes toward the passages and the subject matter, and 3) reading time. In addition, it investigated whether the effects of the variables were interactive and if so, under what conditions.

Method Subjects. The subjects were 120 sixth grade children who came from white, middle-class families and lived near a large midwestern university. They were enrolled in five social studies classes taught by the same teacher and were homogeneously grouped according to ability as measured by scores in standardized tests. The children did not have access to films, workbooks, study guides, or teacher/student discussion on the topic of the passages studied, and they read the experimental materials independently.

Materials. The materials selected for the children to read consisted of three passages of approximately 1,000 words each, taken from chapter six of the Ginn grade six social studies textbook currently used in the subjects'

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classroom. The chapter concerned the later half of the Middle Ages in Europe. The original passages used for the study were written in third person voice (except for map references, which were omitted) and none contained informational or attitudinal information.

The intent was not to rewrite the content of the original text, but to add metadiscourse in the form of words, phrases, or clauses, and to modify the voice. Informational metadiscourse was added to the text on two levels, global and local. On the global level, metadiscourse was added by attaching an elaborate preview and conclusion to each passage and by inserting sentences within the passage which dealt with global aspects of the passage content. On the local level, metadiscourse was added by attaching briefer previews and conclusions to the sub-parts of the passage and by attaching metadiscourse to the existing sentences.

Variables Manipulated. Informational metadiscourse was added on the basis of evidence found in the semantic and structural content of the chapter, the unit title, and the teacher's manual. Attitudinal metadiscourse was added arbitrarily where it seemed reasonable to do so. Voice was changed to interpersonal on both global and local metadiscourse where it was appropriate for the design. Examples of the three variables in a manipulated passage can be seen in Table 3.

Insert Table 3

Measures. Several dependent measures were used to explore the effects of the text manipulation on students' performance and attitudes. A passage test was used to measure retention of information which had a number of subtests. The subtests were designed to test different categories of infor-

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mation. Separate subtests measured retention of information, either central or peripheral to the message of the passage; information that was not directly related to the metadiscourse, and information that was directly stated in the metadiscourse.

The overall passage test scores for each of the three passages had a high degree of reliability. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) for each passage was: passage 1, .82; passage 2, .81; and passage 3, .80.

The second measure, was the Attitude measure which consisted of a series of 14 judgment items for which students rated: 1) their preference for the manipulated text compared to their regular text, 2) their attitude toward the author, designated as "Pat," and 3) their level of interest in the Middle Ages. Thirteen items used a five point nominal scale (1-5), and one item used a three point nominal scale (1-3). The intercorrelational data indicated that eleven of the items were highly intercorrelated and that three items were consistent in their ratings across four administrations of the test.

Two instruments, one cognitive and one affective, were devised as pretests and pilot tested with a group of sixth grade children from another state. The first was a background knowledge test, and the second an affective social studies comfort index (SSCI), which was also administered as a posttest. The pilot test data indicated the test scores showed wide variability for the children chosen for the piloting and seemed to have good face validity.

Design. The design was a 2x2x2x3 (voice x attitude x information x passage) factorial with repeated measures on the passage and attitude tests. Each subject was assigned to a particular experimental condition and thus read all three passages in the same condition and in the same order.

Subjects were placed in eight equal groups by first stratifying the

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subjects on the basis of standardized reading comprehension scores obtained from school records (Stanford Achievement Test, 1973), and then within each stratified level, randomly assigning students to conditions.

Subjects were given the two types of pretests on Day 1. After pretesting was completed, the subjects were told that the experimenter had a friend, Pat, who was writing a new social studies textbook for sixth graders and needed their advice for writing a textbook that was easy and interesting to read and learn from. They were told that they would have the opportunity to read part of that book over the next four days.

Results. Total passage test score. A three-way analysis of variance was performed on the total passage test score data, using total scores across the three passages. The three factors were the presence vs. absence of informational metadiscourse, attitudinal metadiscourse, and interpersonal voice. No main effects or interactions were significant for the passage test overall.

Passage subtest scores. Next, a series of analyses of variance was performed on the passage subtest scores. This approach was justified, since the passage test was not a normal comprehension or retention test, and the subtests were of rather different types, some dealing with passage structure, some with author attitudes, and some with stated content.

In order to investigate the effects of two individual difference dimensions, the subjects were divided at the median score on the vocabulary test (median = 76.83), taken as an intelligence measure, and on the SSCI (median = 20.86), taken as an affective measure. For each of these groups, a 2x2x2 ANOVA was performed on each of the subtest scores, in order to find out whether for that group, the three variables of the study had an effect on that subscore.

There were relatively few significant main effects, and most of these

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were related to students scoring higher on a subtest when the information being tested was directly stated or repeated in the added metadiscourse. Most noteworthy was the lack of effects which might be expected considering the extensive manipulation performed on the three passages with the variables. Even the type of effects just noted were large enough to be significant for only some of the subgroups. The presence of informational discourse, which gave information about the structure of the passage and author strategies, did not raise scores on the structure (DAS) subtest, which tested for awareness and retention of this type of information, suggesting that the students did not remember this type of information. There was little evidence that the informational or attitudinal metadiscourse raised or lowered the scores for retention of information that was not manipulated (i.e. stated, repeated, or emphasized) by the added metadiscourse. Finally, the effects of interpersonal voice were minimal.

The results of significant two-way interaction effects presented in Figures 1 and 2 seem to indicate that using interpersonal vs. impersonal voice differentially affects students who are more vs. less at ease in reading and writing about social studies materials. Interpersonal voice helps the low comfort students when informational metadiscourse is present, and hurts the high comfort students under the same conditions. Further, as seen in Figure 3, interpersonal voice reduces the likelihood that low comfort students will remember such things as author attitudes. While the pattern of the significant three-way interaction is complex, the data indicate particularly good retention in the conditions where interpersonal voice and informational metadiscourse are either present together or both missing, and particularly poor performance when either of these is present alone. In addition, the presence of attitudinal metadiscourse results in moderate scores: groups at either the

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high or low end tend to be those without attitudinal metadiscourse.

Insert Figures 1,2,3

ATTITUDE MEASURE ANALYSES

Main Effects Overall. A three-way analysis of variance was performed on the attitude rating data, using total scores across three ratings. The three factors were the presence vs. absence of informational metadiscourse, attitudinal metadiscourse and interpersonal voice. Again, no main effects or interactions were significant. Next, analyses of variance were carried out separately for each cluster defined subscore, using total rating scores across the four ratings as data. Separate analyses were conducted for all students and for four subgroups: students high vs. low on the vocabulary test, and students high vs. low on the comfort index score obtained prior to participating in the study.

The three significant main effects indicated that the presence of informational metadiscourse decreased the students' rated preference for social studies texts which used a large number of first and second person pronouns and opinion words, the presence of attitudinal metadiscourse increased the high comfort group's interest in the Middle Ages somewhat. There were no main effects for interpersonal voice.

Interaction Effects. The significant interaction showed that for students who had both attitudinal and informational metadiscourse, and those who did not have either, most preferred having just facts in their social studies texts. Students who had just one type of metadiscourse were tolerant of more opinions. Both high and low comfort groups show this pattern, as well as the high and low vocabulary groups. The most attitude-laden texts

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were those with both attitudinal metadiscourse and interpersonal voice, and the students who had these texts were the ones who indicated the greatest preference for social studies texts with just facts. The students indicating the most tolerance for opinions in the text are those who had some exposure to the interpersonal aspect of language, with either attitudinal metadiscourse or interpersonal voice, but who did not have exposure to too much of this interpersonal aspect. In general, it appears that the experimental manipulations had even less effect on the students' attitudes toward the manipulated social studies materials than they did on the students' retention of information from the passage.

Reading Time Analyses. The primary result was that lengthening the text in the manner required by including informational metadiscourse produced longer reading times. The other variables had little effect. It should be noted, however, that while the addition of informational metadiscourse increased the length of the passage from approximately 3,000 words to approximately 6,000 words, an increase of 100 percent, this yielded a reading time increase of only 50 percent. Apparently, the metadiscourse was read faster.

Discussion. While the informational metadiscourse did seem to have some beneficial effect, it was not great, and not necessarily limited to the information on which the metadiscourse focused. Furthermore, the students seemed to react neither negatively nor positively to this added length and the supposedly helpful informational author commentary, in general, as indicated by their attitude scores.

It was expected that attitudinal metadiscourse and interpersonal voice would increase the closeness of the author/reader relation, making the text more interesting and personal to the students. If this occurred, it is not reflected in their responses on the attitude test since there was no general

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effect on ratings of how well the students liked the text, their assessment of the author, or how well they liked the subject matter.

On the other hand, there is some indication that there were more local effects. Subgroups differing on the affective measure showed differences in their response to the use of personal vs. impersonal voice. It may be that the personal style of an author can be helpful to students who are more anxious about their own ability when dealing with certain types of complexities in the text. There is also some indication that students can react negatively to too much metadiscourse, since students getting both attitudinal and informational metadiscourse were the ones who were least in favor of longer texts on the attitude rating.

In general, most of the effects which were observed were limited to certain subgroups of students. This suggests that it may be difficult to make general recommendations about the use of metadiscourse in textbook writing. From the results of current study, it would appear that what effects the addition of metadiscourse may have are likely to be small and specific to certain subgroups.

Explanations For The Lack Of Effects.

1. It may be that it simply doesn't have much effect.
2. It may be that since the students were not used to reading texts of this sort, they simply did not have the experiential background to allow them to appreciate or benefit from it.
3. It may be that subjects could not adequately respond to the types of questions that were used to test retention and effects of the information.
4. It may be that the passage was too difficult for them to understand and remember on their own, thus the added metadiscourse simply added to the load on the studnets.
5. It may be that the crucial factor is not simply the presence of metadiscourse, but what specific type, how it is used and how much it is used.

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6. It is also possible that an artificial text resulted from trying to add metadiscourse to an existing, non-well-written passage.
7. It is also possible that the instruments used to measure the effects of the metadiscourse and voice variables were inappropriate for the questions that were asked, insensitive to what was being measured, or not sufficiently reliable or valid.
8. Finally, the research method used may not be an appropriate method for investigating the effects of metadiscourse and voice.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite the apparent paucity of findings, some aspects of the data are worth highlighting. For example, grouping students on the basis of the affective measure, the SSCI resulted in subgroups who responded differently to the metadiscourse manipulations. There is a need to further refine and validate the current measure, but it is apparent that future reading and writing studies should include a comfort index as a basis for assessing individual differences.

A second interesting finding was that the primary effect of voice appeared to be that of modulating the effects of the metadiscourse variables. Thus, while it may have little direct effect on retention, it may affect the influences of other variables. Future research should explore this possibility, as well.

ISSUES REGARDING METADISCOURSE

Several scholars have pointed out the lack of a firm theoretical basis needed for studying metadiscourse. At present, the notion of metadiscourse involves different definitions, terminologies, and conflicting classification systems. An important theoretical issue is whether 'content-less' metadiscourse can be fit into the current models of discourse in the field of rhetoric. There seems to be a need for somehow integrating the content-

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less characteristics of discourse (which would include pragmatics and metadiscourse) with the content characteristics in a more comprehensive model of discourse.

At present, the discipline of rhetoric, in general, looks favorably upon metadiscourse as it did during the classical period. Those rhetoricians working within a psychological, 'John Lockean' framework during the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries probably would not have been as favorable. Speech communication, a sub-branch of rhetoric, regards metadiscourse as facilitating communication toward metadiscourse but business communication, also a sub-branch of rhetoric, tends to consider it a type of wordiness. Novelists and critics, once positive during the eighteenth century and the Victorian period, and then more negative, now seem to consider metadiscourse a legitimate rhetorical technique in fiction. Linguists of various kinds seem interested in metadiscourse as a phenomenon and several edcuational psychologists regard it as having potential for having positive effects on learning.

Another issue involves the curriculum goals for social studies and indeed for any other school subject. It is impossible to decide whether metadiscourse is beneficial or not, even if research studies in the future find significant effects of metadiscourse on students' performance and attitudes, without first having a clear understanding of curriculum goals. Value questions cannot be answered except in relation to goals.

Metadiscourse raises the issue of epistemology. The field of education may need to ask itself what view of knowledge it should be communicating to students - whether it should present knowledge as fixed, established, and to be memorized - or as correctible, participatory, and changing as new discoveries are made and constantly undergoing debate. Furthermore, there

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are the issues of interpretation and subjectivity, and how these relate to social studies. If history is interpretation, as historians agree that it is, but social studies textbooks present history as facts using an objective, scientific approach, then is this a spurious objectivity?

Side effects would result if metadiscourse were used in social studies textbooks. If a social studies textbook were written by an author with an overt point of view, the issue is raised to whether that kind of textbook is appropriate for young children. At present, children are expected to learn the received wisdom given to them in social studies textbooks, even though historians admit that authors are mythmaking. The issue here is whether it is appropriate to reveal this characteristic of historical knowledge to children. The lack of metadiscourse in a social studies textbook is an index of the pedagogical assumptions in the field of history and social studies.

Still other issues that are raised by considering the use of metadiscourse in textbooks concern the role of the teacher and the role of the learner. If a great deal of metadiscourse is included in the student's texts as part of the connected discourse in the lesson, does this take away from the contribution the teacher can make? The issue is whether textbooks or teachers should provide the metadiscourse to the children if it is appropriate to use metadiscourse. And there is also the issue of whether adding metadiscourse to textbooks decreases the active role of the reader in reading, understanding, and remembering the text. If nothing is left for the reader to do in terms of organizing the information, does this reduce active learning from the text?

The results of the experimental study indicated that metadiscourse was helpful for certain subgroups of students, depending on whether interpersonal

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voice was used or not. This raises the issue of whether the single, standardized textbook approach that is commonly used in schools today for reasons of economy and efficiency can be justified. The multi-text approach, with different groups of students using texts written in different ways (that is, with different amounts or kinds of metadiscourse assistance) might be justified if future studies find the kinds of individual differences observed in the experimental study reported here.

The study failed to find that students were more interested in a text with a personalized author or in the subject matter, but this finding, too, raises the issue of whether it is possible to learn much about interest, attitudes or acceptability of texts until a theory for these affective dimensions is developed.

The children in the study, in general, did not seem to prefer social studies textbooks with an author's opinion over a social studies textbook that was factual. The critical issue, though, may not be whether students prefer a textbook with an author who has a point of view and who uses attitudinal metadiscourse, but whether they need it. With hedges and emphatics removed, for instance, students have no grounds to judge the truth or confidence of assertions and may be too impressed by the text.

The issues and questions that were raised as result of the study of metadiscourse make clear the fact that the issues go beyond the research questions asked in this study. Metadiscourse is but the tip of the iceberg in the general question of what a theory of education should be. Many subleties are involved if an author decides to use metadiscourse, for the decision to use or not use metadiscourse relates to a whole array of other issues regarding the philosophy of knowledge and psychology of learning.

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TABLE 1

EXAMPLES OF TEXTS WITH METADISCOURSE*

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1. I shall now proceed to apply these observations to the work before us: for indeed I have set them down principally to obviate some constructions which the good-nature of mankind, who are always forward to see their friends' virtues recorded, may put to particular parts. I question not but several of my readers will know the lawyer in the stage-coach the moment they hear his voice. It is likewise odd but the wit and the prude meet with some of their acquaintance, as well as all the rest of my characters. To prevent, therefore, any such malicious applications, I declare here, once for all, I describe not men, but manners; not an individual, but a species. Perhaps it will be answered. Are not the characters then taken from life?

   Henry Fielding — **Joseph Andrews**

2. In this work, however, I wished to regard the subject from an altogether different point of view. Immigration altered America. But it also altered the immigrants. And it is the effect upon the newcomers of their arduous transplantation that I have tried to study.

   ...

   I have tried historically to trace the impact of separation of the disruption in the lives and work of people who left one world to adjust to a new.

   Oscar Handlin — **The Uprooted**

3. ... To me it seems no genetic accident that Polynesians, as a race are large and powerful people...I felt that if a [illegible]ing canoe were built and sailed today, it would function as a cultural catalyst and inspire the revival of almost-forgotten aspects of Hawaiian life.

   Herb Kane — **National Geographic**

4. I'm going to tell you the causes of the Renaissance. Let me begin with the fall of Constantinople. The Turk-Moslems tried once more to conquer Constantinople. This time they had won. Merchants, painters, teachers, and traders all fled to Italy, Spain, and Rome. This was the beginning of the Renaissance. The Renaissance was the time when people had more interest in art. Famous painters were born during this time, such as, Raphael, Michaelangelo, Leonard De Vinci and D'Este. Leonardo Da Vinci painted the painted the famous unknown woman called the Mona Lisa. Michael Angelo was a sculptor as well as a painter. He carved a beautiful statue know as the Angel. That is the statue I admire most of all. If you've ever seen the lovely thing, you will understand why. These lovely works of art are priceless. Let's now get back to during the Renaissance. Nobles were in more demand for art. They hired painters to paint for them. This is why more people wanted edcuation, and schools grew. I think you would find the Renaissance very interesting.

   Ginny Henderson, 6th grader
   a model text written for
   other 6th graders

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*Metadiscourse is underlined

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TABLE 2

INFORMATIONAL AND ATTITUDINAL AND TOTAL METADISCOURSE USED FOR ALL SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTS

Text Type	Total a Words	Metadiscourse Type (with frequency per 1000 words)		
		Informational	Attitudinal	Total Metadiscourse
Textbooks	129,000	1.17	.81	1.98
Nontextbooks	77,000	1.85	4.32	6.17
Typical Textbooks	82,000	.55	.78	1.33
Typical Nontextbooks	66,000	.47	3.70	4.17
Atypical textbooks	47,000	2.26	.85	3.11
Atypical nontextbooks	11,000	10.18	8.09	18.27
All typical texts	148,000	.51	1.08	2.59
All atypical texts	58,000	3.76	2.22	5.98
Typical textbooks	82,000	.55	.78	1.33
Atypical textbooks	47,000	2.26	.85	3.11
Typical nontextbooks	66,000	.47	3.70	4.17
Atypical nontextbooks	11,000	10.18	8.09	18.27

a

approximate

TABLE 3

EXAMPLES OF MANIPULATION*

An Excerpt from Passage I with Interpersonal Voice

VAI

In Part One I review for you the early Middle Ages. The way I do this is by describing what life was like during that time. The main idea I am trying to get across to you here is that the early Middle Ages was a time without learning and freedom for most people.

I think it unfortunate that [during the early Middle Ages, most Europeans knew little about other parts of the world.] I also find it unfortunate that [their lives were ruled by the promises that were part of the feudal system.]

VAi

I think it unfortunate that [during the early Middle Ages, most Europeans knew little about other parts of the world.] I also find it unfortunate that [their lives were ruled by the promises that were part of the feudal system.]

VaI

In Part One I review for you the early Middle Ages. the way I do this is by describing what life was like during that time. The main idea I am trying to get across to you here is that the early Middle Ages was a time without learning and freedom for most people.

[During the early Middle Ages, most Europeans knew little about other parts of the world. Their lives were ruled by the promises that were part of the feudal system.]

Vai

I found that [during the early Middle Ages, most Europeans knew little about other parts of the world. Their lives were ruled by the promises that were part of the feudal system.]

* Capital letters indicate presence of Interpersonal Voice (V), Attitudinal (A), or Informational Metadiscourse (I). Lower case letters indicate absence of interpersonal voice (v), attitudinal voice (a), or informational metadiscourse (i).

Figure 1

Comparisons of 2-way Interactions (Voice X Information) for the High Comfort Group on Passage Tests

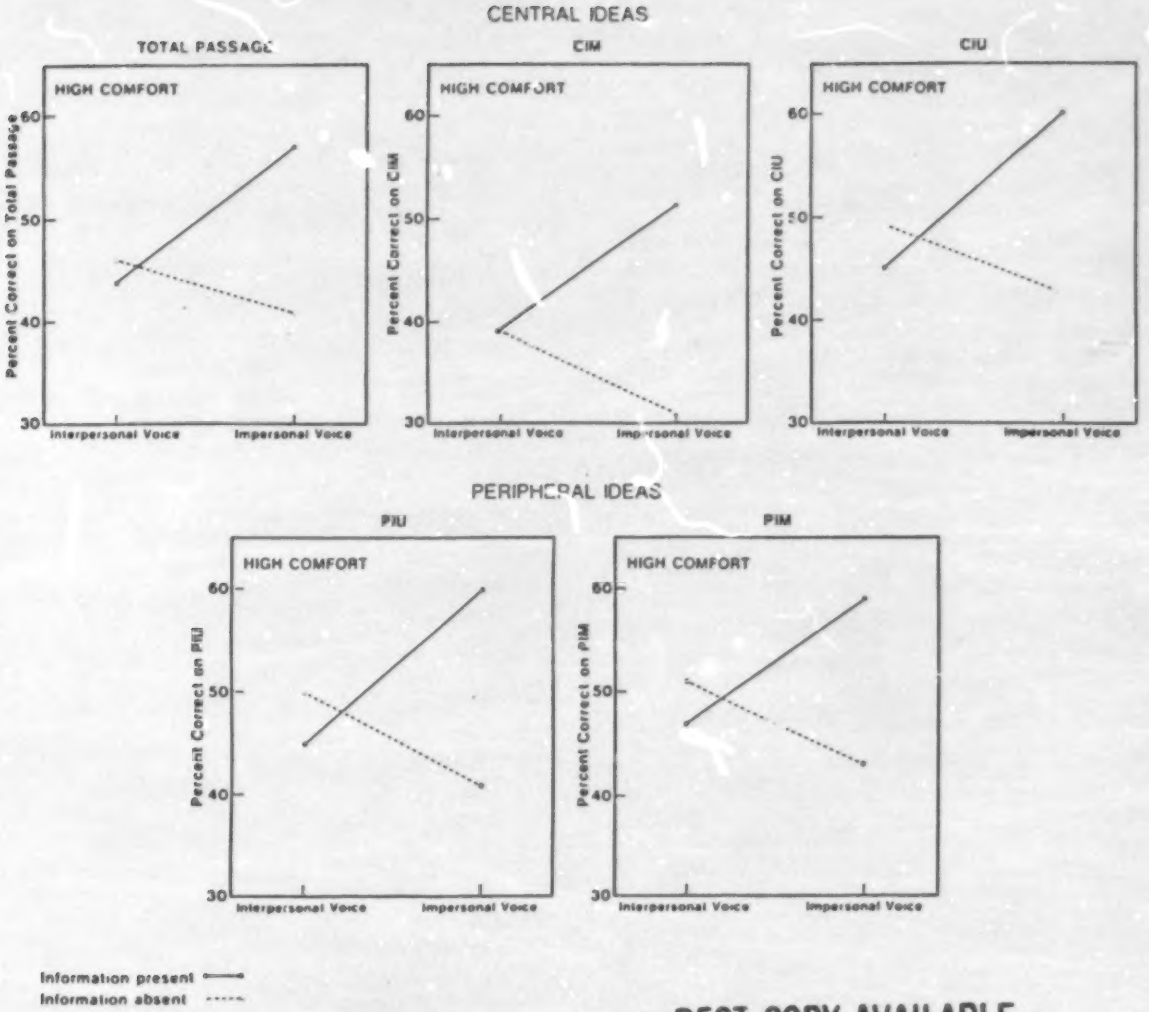

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Figure 2

Comparisons of 2-way Interactions (Voice X Information) for the Low Comfort Group on Total Passage, CIU, PIU, AND PIM Tests

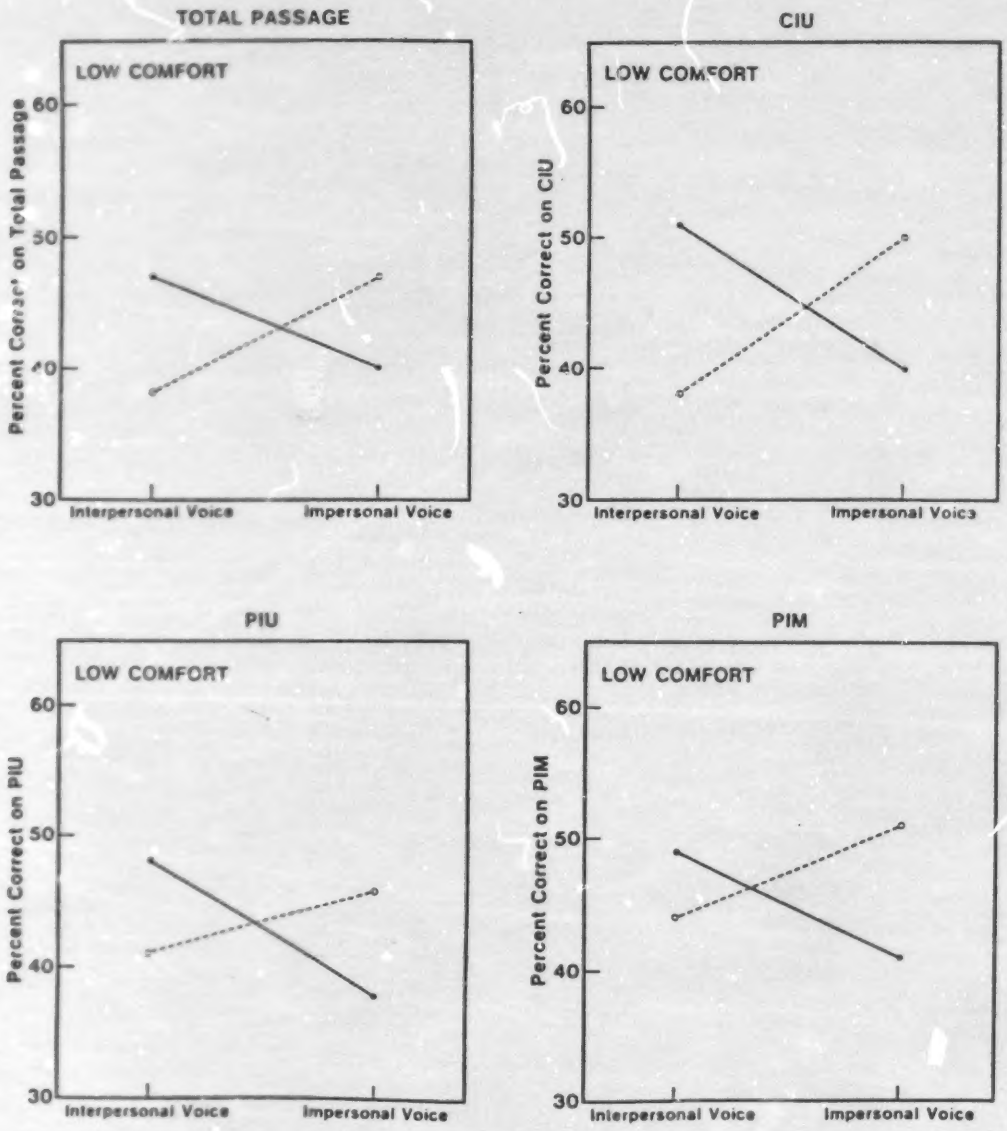

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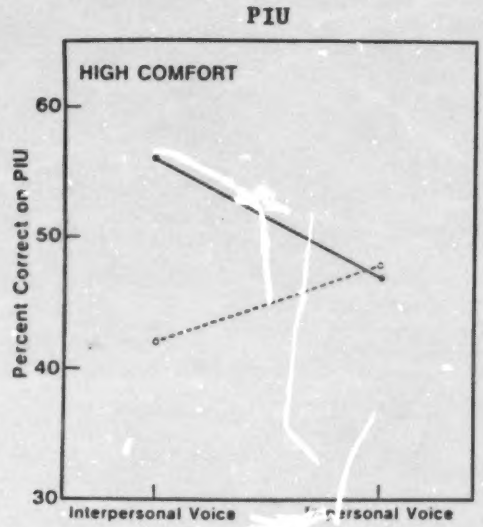
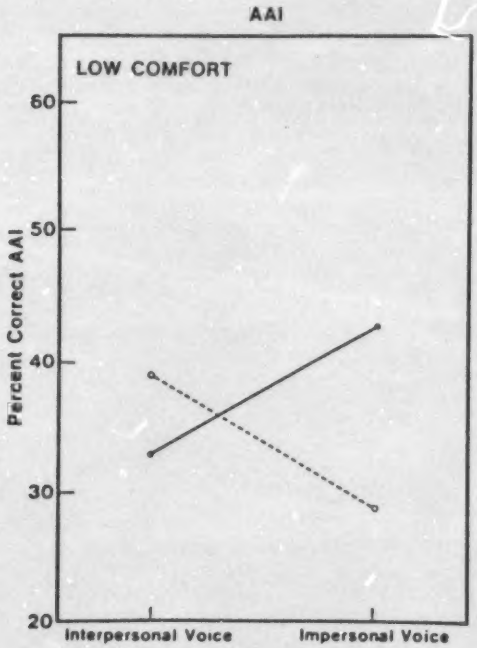
Figure 3

Comparisons of 2-way Interactions (Voice X Attitude) for High and Low Comfort Groups on PIU and AAI Tests





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LANDSCAPES:A STATE-OF-THE-ART ASSESSMENT OF READING COMPREHENSION RESEARCH 1974-1984

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APPENDICES:A=TAXONOMY,B=HYPOTHESES,C=REFERENCES,D=AUTHOR BIOS

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